



Photos by Staff Sgt. Molly A. Gilliam

Members of the Turkish Air Force pose before going to work. Below, The Turkish Air Force flies one of the most advanced aircraft in the world, the F-16 Falcon.



Members from the 94th Fighter Squadron, 1st Fighter Wing, Langley Air Force Base, Va., prepare an F-15C for another flight on the Nellis ranges Below, a Navy EA-6B Prowler from the VAQ 135 Squadron, Whidbey Island, Wash. is checked out before its next flight.



Red Flag is back!

By Tech. Sgt. Richard Covington
AWFC Public Affairs

United States and allied air forces are battling over the Nevada skies the next few weeks. Some have said this battle is harder than Desert Storm or any other recent air campaign. However, no one will lose this battle — everyone wins. Almost a thousand people and 100 aircraft from the United States and allied nations are participating in Red Flag 00-2 through Feb. 19. Red Flag is a composite combat training exercise involving air forces of the United States and its allies. Red Flag is held four times a year at Nellis.

This year will mark the 25th anniversary of Red Flag. It has evolved over the years from a handful of participants to what is today the most realistic aerial wargame scenario in the world. Its mission remains the same: to simulate the first 10 days of a combat environment to improve the survivability of the combat air forces and allied forces.

This is probably the most realistic combat

training aircrews will ever receive, said Lt. Col. Craig Underhill, 414th Combat Training Squadron Adversary Tactics operations officer.

“Red Flag will enhance their training experience and hone their warfighting skills,” said Lt. Col. Underhill.

“When aircrews leave Red Flag they depart with an understanding of how the whole package operates,” said Capt. Jim Noetze, a B-52 instructor pilot from the 20th Bomb Squadron from Barksdale. The whole package consists of fighters, bombers, space assets, intelligence, electronic warfare, air refueling and any other asset that might be deployed in an air campaign.

According to Capt. Dave Sikora, radar-navigator instructor, they will focus on the use of the new weapons that employ global-positioning guidance during this exercise. “These weapons give us the ability to drop munitions in almost any weather, at high altitude and with precision,” he said.

The members of the unit believe the addition of the B-52 substantially increases the warfighting options of an air component commander.

B-52s dropped more than 25 percent of weapons tonnage during the operations against Kosovo.

“Essentially the B-52 will continue to be utilized in future operations,” said Capt. Elizabeth Chamberlain, intelligence officer, 93rd Bomb Squadron. Capt. Chamberlain is a full-time Air Force reservist here to test the 2nd Bomb Wing’s ability to integrate reserve members into the operations.

For the members of the Turkish Air Force, this Red Flag brings exciting challenges. The Turkish Air Force has been teamed up with the 414th Combat Training Squadron Adversary Tactics division as adversaries flying red air during the first period of Red Flag.

“We (the Turkish Air Force) already have two aggressor squadrons,” said Maj. Bilal Yalin, Turkish Air Force operations officers. “We’re here to learn how composite combat exercises work,” said Maj. Yalin. “This (Red Flag) is important to every air force.”

One hundred members of the Turkish Air

Force traveled almost 7,000 miles from Ankara, Turkey to participate in Red Flag. They airlifted in aircraft parts and supplies and flew in six F-16 Fighting Falcons and three KC-135 Stratotankers.

The Turkish participants say they hope to gain valuable experience flying missions with the United States Air Force’s only Aggressor squadron said Maj. Yalin.

According to Capt. Keith Bryza, officer in charge of ground intercept control for 414th CTS Adversary Threat, many countries’ aircrews throughout the world have been taught by the former Soviet Union and continue to learn these tactics. Maj. Yalin said, like the U.S. Air Force Aggressors, the Turkish Air Force aggressor squadron incorporates former Soviet Union tactics into their training as well.

Red Flag allows aircrews to prepare for threats they may encounter in real world engagements.

This is the second Red Flag involving the Turkish Air Force. They previously participated in 1997.

